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the United States; appropriate State and Federal Agencies; and the clerk or other appropriate officer of the county in which the proposed LMU is located. The notice will be posted or published in accordance with the procedures of such offices. The notice shall be submitted by the authorized officer to a local newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the proposed LMU for publication at least once a week for 2 weeks consecutively.

(2) *Notice of proposed decision.* Prior to the final approval or establishment of any LMU, the authorized officer shall have the proposed decision published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the proposed LMU at least once a week for 2 weeks consecutively and shall not approve the application for at least 30 days after the first publication of the proposed decision. Such notice may be published concurrently with the notice of availability.

(3) *Public participation.* A public hearing shall be conducted upon the receipt by the authorized officer of a written request for a hearing from any person having a direct interest which is or may be affected adversely by approval of the proposed LMU, provided that the written request is received within 30 days after the first publication of the notice of proposed decision in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the proposed LMU. A complete transcript of any such public hearing, including any written comments submitted for the record, shall be kept and made available to the public during normal business hours at the office of the authorized officer that held the hearing, and shall be furnished at cost to any interested party. In making any decision or taking any action subsequent to such public hearing, the authorized officer shall take into account all testimony presented at the public hearing.

§ 3481.3 Confidentiality.

(a) Information on file with MMS obtained pursuant to the rules of this part or part 3400 of this title shall be open for public inspection and copying during regular office hours upon a written request, pursuant to rules at 43 CFR part 2, except that:

43 CFR Ch. II (10–1–03 Edition)

(1) Information such as geologic and geophysical data and maps pertaining to Federal recoverable coal reserves obtained from exploration licensees under the rules of this part or part 3410 of this title shall not be disclosed except as provided in 43 CFR 2.20(c).

(2) Information obtained from an operator/lessee under the rules of this part that constitutes trade secrets and commercial or financial information which is privileged or confidential or other information that may be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(b)), such as geologic and geophysical data and maps, shall not be available for public inspection or made public or disclosed without the consent of the operator/lessee.

(3) Upon termination of a Federal lease, such geologic and geophysical data and maps shall be made available to the public.

(4) Upon issuance or readjustment of a Federal lease, the estimated Federal recoverable coal reserves figure shall not be made available to the public unless such a release has been included as a Federal lease term.

(b) Information requested by the operator/lessee to be kept confidential under this section shall be clearly marked "CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION." All pages so marked shall be physically separated from other portions of the submitted materials. All information not marked "CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION" will be available for public inspection, except as stated at paragraph (a) of this section for data submitted prior to August 30, 1982.

[47 FR 33179, July 30, 1982; 47 FR 53366, Nov. 26, 1982. Redesignated and amended at 48 FR 41589, 41590, Sept. 16, 1983]

3481.4 Temporary interruption in coal severance.

3481.4–1 Can I temporarily interrupt coal severance and still be qualified as producing?

Yes, a temporary interruption in coal severance allows you (the lessee/operator) to halt the extraction of coal for a limited period of time without jeopardizing your qualifications under section (2)(a)(2)(A) of MLA to receive additional leases. During the period of a

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temporary interruption in coal severance, BLM still considers you lease or LMU to be producing so as not to preclude you from receiving a new or transferred lease.

[62 FR 44370, Aug. 20, 1997]

3481.4–2 What are some examples of circumstances that qualify for a temporary interruption of coal severance?

(a) Movement, failure, or repair of major equipment, such as draglines or longwalls; overburden removal; adverse weather; employee absences;

(b) Inability to sever coal due to orders issued by governmental authorities for cessation or relocation of the coal severance operations; and

(c) Inability to sell or distribute coal severed from the lease or LMU out of or away from the lease or LMU.

[62 FR 44370, Aug. 20, 1997]

3481.4–3 Does a temporary interruption in coal severance affect the diligence requirements applicable to my lease or LMU?

No, a temporary interruption in coal severance covered by §§ 3481.4–1 to 3481.4–4 does not change the diligence requirements of subpart 3483 applicable to your lease or LMU.

[62 FR 44370, Aug. 20, 1997]

3481.4–4 What is the aggregate amount of time I can temporarily interrupt coal severance and have BLM consider my lease or LMU producing?

(a) If you (the lessee/operator) want BLM to consider your lease or LMU to be producing, the aggregate of all temporary interruptions in coal severance from your lease or LMU must not exceed 1 year in the 5-consecutive-year period immediately preceding the date of BLM's determination of lessee qualifications under § 3472.1–2 of this chapter.

(b) BLM will not count toward the aggregate interruption limit described in paragraph (a) of this section:

(1) Any interruption in coal severance that is 14 days or less in duration;

(2) Any suspension granted under § 3483.3 of this part; and

(3) Any BLM-approved suspension of the requirements of § 3472.1–2(e)(1) of this part for reasons of strikes, the ele-

ments, or casualties not attributable to the operator/lessee before diligent development is achieved.

[62 FR 44370, Aug. 20, 1997]

Subpart 3482—Exploration and Resource Recovery and Protection Plans

§ 3482.1 Exploration and resource recovery and protection plans.

(a) *Exploration plans.* For background and application procedures for exploration licenses for unleased Federal coal, see 43 CFR part 3410. For background and application procedures for exploration for Federal coal within an approved permit area after mining operations have commenced, see 30 CFR Chapter VII. For any other exploration for Federal coal prior to commencement of mining operations, the following rules apply:

(1) Except for casual use, before conducting any exploration operations on federally leased or licensed lands, the operator/lessee shall submit an exploration plan to and obtain approval from the authorized officer. Casual use, as used in this paragraph, means activities which do not cause appreciable surface disturbance or damage to lands or other resources and improvements. Casual use does not include use of heavy equipment or explosives or vehicular movement off established roads and trails.

(2) The operator/lessee shall submit five copies of exploration plans to the authorized officer. Exploration plans shall be consistent with and responsive to the requirements of the Federal lease or license for the protection of recoverable coal reserves and other resources and for the reclamation of the surface of the lands affected by the operations. The exploration plan shall show that reclamation is an integral part of the proposed operations and that reclamation will progress as contemporaneously as practicable with such operations.

(3) Exploration plans shall contain all of the following:

(i) The name, address, and telephone number of the applicant, and, if applicable, the operator/lessee of record.